

In the Claims

1. -8 Cancelled

9. (Withdrawn) A method of diagnosing a disease associated with (a) aberrant expression of Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 (SEQ ID NO. 26, SEQ ID NO: 27, SEQ ID NO. 25, SEQ ID NO: 28, respectively) and/or (b) aberrant activities or amounts of a Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 polypeptide in a subject comprising:

- (a) determining (a) the amount of expression of Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 and/or (b) the amount of biologically active Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 polypeptide in a biological sample; and
- (b) diagnosing a disease associated with (a) aberrant expression of Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 and/or (b) aberrant activities or amounts of a Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 polypeptide or a risk for the development of such disease based on an altered amount of expression of Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 and/or (b) an altered amount of biologically active Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 polypeptide compared to a control.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Withdrawn) A method for identifying activators/agonists or inhibitors/antagonists of a Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 polypeptide (SEQ ID NO. 26, SEQ ID NO: 27, SEQ ID NO. 25, SEQ ID NO: 28, respectively) comprising the steps of:

- (a) incubating a candidate compound with said polypeptide;
- (b) assaying a biological activity, and
- (c) determining if a biological activity of said polypeptide has been altered.

12. (Withdrawn) A method of identifying and obtaining a drug candidate for therapy of a disease associated with (a) aberrant expression of the gene encoding Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 (SEQ ID NO. 21, SEQ ID NO: 22, SEQ ID NO. 20, SEQ ID NO: 23, respectively) and/or (b) aberrant activities or amounts of Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 (SEQ ID NO. 26, SEQ ID NO: 27, SEQ ID NO. 25, SEQ ID NO: 28, respectively) comprising the steps of

- (a) contacting a Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 polypeptide or a cell expressing said polypeptide, and optionally the corresponding ligand(s), in the presence of components capable of providing a detectable signal in response to binding to said drug candidate to be screened; and

- (b) detecting presence or absence of a signal or increase of the signal generated, wherein the presence or increase of the signal is indicative for a putative drug.
13. (Withdrawn) An activator/agonist or inhibitor/antagonist of a Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 polypeptide (SEQ ID NO. 26, SEQ ID NO: 27, SEQ ID NO. 25, SEQ ID NO: 28, respectively) or binding partner of said polypeptide(s) obtainable by the method of claim 11.
14. (Withdrawn) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound which is capable of modulating the expression of a gene encoding futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 (SEQ ID NO. 21, SEQ ID NO: 22, SEQ ID NO. 20, SEQ ID NO: 23, respectively) or the activity of Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 (SEQ ID NO. 26, SEQ ID NO: 27, SEQ ID NO. 25, SEQ ID NO: 28, respectively) and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier.
15. (Withdrawn) The pharmaceutical composition of claim 14, wherein the compound stimulates expression of the gene encoding Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 (SEQ ID NO. 21, SEQ ID NO: 22, SEQ ID NO. 20, SEQ ID NO: 23, respectively) or the activity of Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 polypeptide (SEQ ID NO. 26, SEQ ID NO: 27, SEQ ID NO. 25, SEQ ID NO: 28, respectively).
16. (Withdrawn) The pharmaceutical composition of claim 15, wherein the compound is a nucleotide molecule encoding a polypeptide having a biological activity of Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4, a Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 polypeptide, an activator/agonist or inhibitor/antagonist of a Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 polypeptide.
17. (Withdrawn) A method of preparation of a pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of a disease associated with (a) aberrant expression of Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 and/or a gene involved into the *wnt* signal cascade and/or (b) aberrant activities or amounts of a Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 and/or polypeptide involved into the Wnt signal cascade comprising using a compound of claim 16.
18. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 7, wherein the disease is a tumor or a disease of the kidneys, muscle, bones and eyes.
19. (Withdrawn) A method of preparing a pharmaceutical composition for activating or inhibiting the Wnt signal cascade, the method comprising:

using a nucleotide molecule encoding a polypeptide having a biological activity of Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4, a Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 polypeptide, an activator/agonist of a Futrin 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 polypeptide or binding partner of said polypeptide(s) for the preparation of the pharmaceutical composition.

20. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 19 for preparation of a composition for supporting regenerative processes.

21. (Currently amended) A method of identifying a binding partner for a Futrin 2 polypeptide wherein the binding of the binding partner to the Futrin 2 polypeptide that affects Wnt signaling activity of the Futrin 2 polypeptide, the method comprising:

- (a) providing a cellular system comprising the Futrin 2 polypeptide and contacting said Futrin 2 polypeptide with a compound to be screened; and
- (b) determining if binding of the compound to the Futrin 2 has occurred thereby to form-forming a Futrin 2/ binding partner complex; and
- (c) assaying the Futrin 2/binding partner complex to determine if the Wnt signaling activity of the Futrin 2 polypeptide is altered by the binding of the partner and wherein the activity of Futrin 2 polypeptide is measured using a Wnt-inducible reporter assay.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, wherein the compound is an antibody.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21, further comprising: determining if the altered activity is inhibition of said compound inhibits the Wnt signaling activity of the futrin 2 polypeptide.

24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

determining the level of Futrin 2 polypeptide before and after contact with the compound to be screened.

25. – 26. (Cancelled)

27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, wherein the compound to be screened comprises a detectable signal.

28. (Currently amended) The method of claim 23, ~~further comprising:~~ wherein the step of assaying comprises determining if said compound exhibits agonist or antagonist Wnt signaling activity.

29. -31 (Cancelled)

32. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the assay is an *in vitro* cellular system expressing Futrin 2 polypeptide and comprising a vector comprising a luciferase reporter gene under control of a Wnt-inducible promoter wherein the Futrin 2 polypeptide synergizes with Wnt and assaying the Futrin 2 activity is measured by the luciferase activity.

33. (Previously presented) A method of identifying a binding partner for a Futrin 2 polypeptide that affects Wnt signaling activity of the polypeptide, the method comprising:

- (a) contacting said Futrin 2 polypeptide with a compound to be screened; and
- (b) determining if binding of the compound to the Futrin 2 has occurred thereby forming a Futrin 2/ binding partner complex; and
- (c) assaying the Futrin 2/binding partner complex to determine if the Wnt signaling activity of the Futrin 2 polypeptide is inhibited.

34. (Previously presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the amino acid sequence of Futrin 2 consists of SEQ ID NO. 26.